



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



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Snowden Blew Too Much Whistle

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Snowden: Blew too much whistle

In the Cd'A Press (Nov. 25 and 26), I posed questions to readers about the principles behind Uncle Sam's NSA surveillance of American citizens, as well as Edward Snowden's revelations of these operations. Both actions were illegal, and I offered a hypothetical choice to the reader: Choose the unethical party to this episode.



Uyles Black

Guest opinion

I was surprised more readers did not respond to my speculative challenge. In hindsight, the lack of feedback was likely because I presented both sides of the argument, which discouraged the writing of letters of outrage from conventional left- and right-wingers.

As with most of my guest columns for this newspaper, I attempt to pose both sides of an issue. I may have a bias toward one or the other, but one of my main goals in these columns is to ask the reader to try to fit into another's shoes, to at least attempt to see the landscape

from another perspective.

Answering my own question. Regarding my question of which party (the U.S. government or Edward Snowden) is the more culpable agent in this affair, I offer this answer: Both are guilty, but in different ways. The government is guilty of deceiving and lying to its citizens. Snowden is guilty of whistle-blowing overkill.

The illegality of the government is well-established. In May 2015, a federal court ruled that the NSA had violated the law by its warrantless collection of U.S. citizens' communications records.

The record on Snowden is less clear. Certainly, he exposed the illegality of NSA's programs, but he also revealed much more. He did not have to make public many of NSA's operations that are legitimate and in conformance with its charter. His actions compromised aspects of NSA's operations.

Snowden is at the same time a hero and a villain. He exposed an illegal Orwellian-like overreach of an American spy agency. Yet, he could have

accomplished this act by releasing only the information pertaining to the specific illegalities of the agency.

The model for how Snowden should have acted is Daniel Ellsberg, the whistle blower of the Pentagon Papers (1971). Ellsberg consulted with Congressional members and even Henry Kissinger before he released only parts of the intelligence documents he had obtained. He kept secret the documents that dealt with current matters.

Ellsberg leaked state secrets to the public. Snowden swamped the public with state secrets.

I applaud Ellsberg. I applaud but also admonish Snowden. Here's the rub with Snowden. He states, "Technology works differently than the law." He claims, "While law is important...at the end of the day, law is simply letters on a page."

Simply letters on a page? What foolish and dangerous inanity. Technology, such as digital files and the Internet, does not alter the rule of law to being merely letters on a page. In the cyberworld of digital technology, the law becomes even more

important, because digital data and the Internet make it easier to break the law.

Furthermore, with the advent of a largely irresponsible social media and the related decline of responsible journalism, this new age makes it more difficult to discern truth from lies.

Mr. Snowden, thank you for exposing the misrule of law by a government institution. But think again about your ideas of technology rendering the rule of law to be outdated. In the digital world and the Internet, the rule of law becomes even more important to humans' well-being.

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While in the US. Navy, Uyles Black of Coeur d'Alene served as a crypto officer during the Vietnam War, and later was the head of two departments at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). These units were responsible for gathering information from U.S. military attachés around the world and disseminating this information (as well as National Security Estimates [NIEs]) to all branches of the military and selected civilian intelligence agencies.